

The Grebe

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 20

WINTER 2017

See update on the
"Sagebrush
Steppe
Restoration
Project"
(Page 4)

Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge

Our mission is to promote,
protect and provide resources to
preserve and enhance

Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

for the enjoyment of present
and future generations.



Friends of Deer Flat Board of Directors

Bob Christensen, President
Vice-President (open)

Tricia Matthews, Treasurer
Mary Jo Schumacher, Secretary
Kris Horton, Member
Kathleen McCarter, Member

Contact Information

13751 Upper Embankment Rd
Nampa ID 83686

Email: friendsofdfwr@gmail.com
[www.facebook.com/
FriendsofDeerFlat](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofDeerFlat)

Bob Faller
Newsletter Editor

Frigid & Snowy Winter at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

The past month has been good for Frosty the Snowman at Deer Flat NWR. However, it has been hazardous for wintering wildlife, many of which have fled to warmer climes or dug deeper into their nests or burrows. For the past month, Lake Lowell has been covered with a layer of ice and snow—good for ice fishermen, but what about the fish? The photos below were taken from the Refuge's Facebook page. Enjoy!



See two other winter weather-related stories on Page 3:
"Wintering Pollinators" and "Winter Bird Feeding Project"

President's Message

by Bob Christensen

Dear Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge:

First, **thanks to all of you** who have helped the Friends organization through another successful year. And a special thanks to the 2016 Friends Board for their dedicated service. All board members will be continuing in their respective positions to guide us to another successful year, with the exception of Bob Ruesink, who has resigned from the board. We will miss your contributions, Bob.

Your 2017 board members are:

President: Bob Christensen

Vice-President: (Open)

Mary Jo Shumacher, Secretary

Tricia Matthews, Treasurer

Kathleen McCarter and Kris Horton, Board Members at Large

In 2016, we had the opportunity to:

- ✚ Celebrate the Friends' 10th Anniversary during several events.
- ✚ Complete signage and displays for the Della Johnson Memorial Trail.
- ✚ Reopen The Grebe Nature Store for a productive sales year.
- ✚ Continue the winter bird feeding program, which provides service opportunities for many volunteers.
- ✚ Enhance the pollinator garden with a new arbor and new plantings.
- ✚ Obtain photos (for the second year) which document the nesting activities of the refuge bald eagles.
- ✚ Provide volunteer meals and refreshments for several Refuge-sponsored events.
- ✚ Award eight busing scholarships for local schools to bring students to the Refuge for "Discovery Wildlife Journeys" field trips.
- ✚ One of my favorite refuge activities for the past year was initiating the Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Project (see full story on Page 4).

The above list does not cover the many behind the scenes efforts and other volunteer services that Friends members participated in. Your service is very much appreciated. Thank you all!



Friends Website -- friendsofdeerflat.org

Be sure to check out our website. There you can find the latest on:



- ✚ Bald eagle nesting success for the past two years
- ✚ Friends Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Project
- ✚ Identification of current board members
- ✚ Friends' past newsletters
- ✚ Pollinator garden
- ✚ Engraved memorial bricks (available for purchase) placed in the pollinator garden in your or someone else's name,
- ✚ Nature store hours at the Visitor Center
- ✚ Upcoming activities at the Refuge
- ✚ ... and much more!

Wintering Pollinators

by Tricia Matthews

Winter is quite a difficult time for pollinators. It is cold and often wet. Frost wipes out most flowers and drastically reduces food availability. **Pollinators like those found at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge (see below) have evolved through various strategies to overcome this problem.**



**Example of a
Pollinator Hibernation/Nesting Box**

Honeybees overwinter as a whole colony inside a beehive. When temperatures drop below 10°, they stop foraging and begin to cluster around the queen in the center of the hive, rotating to keep warm.

Solitary bees do not maintain colonies, have neither queens nor workers, and have evolved different strategies to survive winter. Adult bees are normally active for only about three months a year (mostly spring/summer, depending on the species) and then die after mating. The offspring survive winter inside the nest cells, either as young adults or as larvae. Nests are built in hollow reeds, in holes in wood or walls, in dead stems, or in underground chambers.

Hoverflies have two strategies to survive winter: they either hide in the soil as fully-grown larvae, or they hibernate as adults in sheltered places such as the nooks and crannies of old trees.

Butterflies and **moths** display a wide range of strategies to survive winter. Depending on the species, they can overwinter as eggs, as caterpillars, as a chrysalis or pupa (the stage between caterpillar and adult), as a hibernating imago (the adult moth or butterfly), or by migration to warmer climates.

What can **you** do to help pollinators survive winter? Don't clean your flower beds until spring and don't till your soil. This will provide cover, warmth and burrowing opportunities for many pollinators and other beneficial insects like ladybugs. Another way you can help is to place a hibernation/nesting box in your yard. It should be placed in a location that receives daily sunshine but is relatively protected from wind and wet weather. These boxes are available in the Grebe Store at Deer Flat, at other garden shops, or they can be made at home.

Winter Bird Feeding Project

The Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge are continuing efforts to feed wintering songbirds, quail, and other birds at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge ... **and we need your help!**

We are asking all Friends and other community members to help with the winter bird feeding project by donating wild bird seed (mixed, sunflower and thistle seed) or money to purchase seed. We appreciate your generosity to help keep feeders full all season long.

Monetary donations can be sent to "Friends of Deer Flat", 13751 Upper Embankment Road, Nampa, ID, 83686. Bags of seeds can be dropped off at the same address. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Christensen (208-454-2518).

We also want to thank Rachel and David Staats for directing the feeding program for the second year in a row. If you have any questions about the feeding program, please contact Rachel & David Staats at deerflat@fws.gov.



USFWS/Susan Kain

Update on Friends' Native Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Project

As announced in our last newsletter, the **Sagebrush Steppe Restoration Project** adjacent to the visitor center is underway. Native bunch grasses were planted at the site in late October. We are hopeful that moisture from the recent snow pack will bring the grasses up in profusion this spring.

In early December, a crew of 10 volunteers harvested seeds from the native sagebrush and saltbush shrubs on the refuge uplands. These seeds were delivered to Lucky Peak Nursery for growing into containerized seedlings, to be planted on the restoration site at the Refuge this coming fall.

Please contact Susan Kain, refuge volunteer coordinator, at 208-467-9278, if you would like to be placed on the list to help plant shrub seedlings this fall. We will need many volunteers to plant hundreds of seedlings in a short period of time.

Seeding Bunch Grass on Restoration Site

Photos by Randy Aulbach & Bob Christensen



Harvesting Sagebrush Seed

Photos by Susan Kain



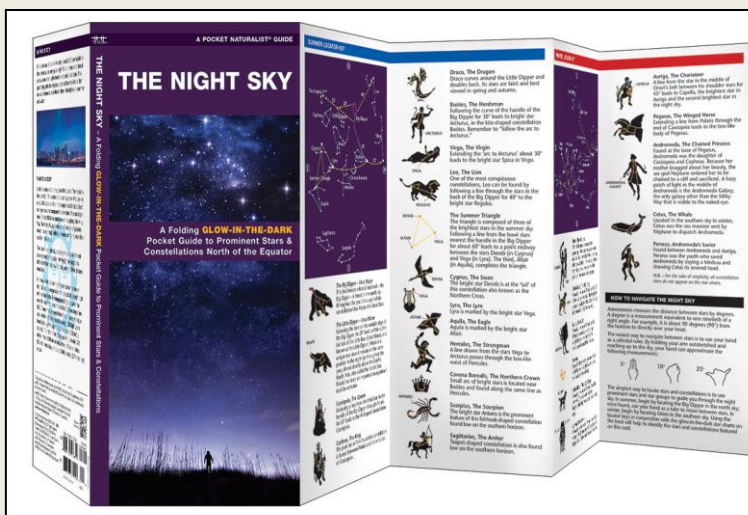
Recent Refuge Happenings

by Annette deKnijf, Refuge Manager

- The **Bronco Billy Interpretive Panel** was unveiled at the Upper Embankment (October 8, 2016): Sandy Kershner has been working for several years to memorialize Idaho filming locations for Clint Eastwood's 1980 film, *Bronco Billy*. Deer Flat NWR is one of those locations. Susan Kain worked with Sandy in developing an appropriate interpretive panel and installing it as part of the Centennial Trail suite of panels.
- The Refuge held its annual **Volunteer Appreciation Lunch** (November 5, 2016). Steve Crouse (pictured right) was presented the "2016 Volunteer of the Year" award.
- A **Monarch butterfly**, raised & tagged by Dusty Perkins' intern, Vance McFarland, at College of Western Idaho, and released at the Refuge, **made it to Santa Cruz, CA**. The butterfly is named "Miracle."
<http://cwidaho.cc/news/news-room/cwi-butterfly-defies-odds-makes-history>
- The **Creepy Critters Event** (October 29, 2016) was a big success with close to 600 participants. The Friends provided hot chocolate and cookies to refresh the ghosts and goblins who attended.
- The Department of the Interior and YMCA are partnering on an initiative called **"Let's Move! Outside, Boise."** Annette and Susan will serve on the steering committee, representing the Refuge, as this initiative moves forward. The program is designed to engage the next generation of outdoor stewards and inspire millions of young adults to play, learn, serve and work in the great outdoors.
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1800570100173700/> and <http://mayor.cityofboise.org/news-releases/2016/06/boise-selected-by-interior-department-for-lets-move!-outside-initiative-with-ymca/>
- **Lake Lowell Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Plan:** The Treasure Valley community, including Deer Flat refuge staff, worked to prepare this plan, which provides recommendations for the next steps to connect and complete bike-pedestrian pathways to the lake.
<https://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/programs/flpp/studies/lake-lowell-access-plan.htm>



Volunteer of the Year:
Steve Crouse
Photo USFWS/Mia Callahan



Special Upcoming Event (3/4/17):

The annual Refuge Star Party will be held on March 4, 2017, from 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Refuge's Visitor Center. Stargazing will be the main activity (hoping the skies will be clear). We will also have College of Idaho's StarLab at the event. Get prepared for this fascinating event by picking up "The Night Sky," a folding guide now available at the *Grebe Nest Nature Store*. This practical pocket reference is laminated for durability and offers an excellent source of portable information for novices and experts alike.

GREBE'S NEST NATURE STORE

Proceeds from the
Grebe's Nest Nature Store
are used to help fund
conservation projects and public
outreach events at
Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge



Starting in 2017, all members of the
“Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge”
will enjoy **10% off all merchandise
purchased in the nature store.** Just
present your membership card to access
this member benefit.

Hours of Operation

Mondays
1 pm to 4 pm

Tuesdays
8 am to 4 pm

Wednesdays
9 am to Noon

Fridays
10 am to 2 pm

Saturdays (if staffed)
10 am to 4 pm

*For questions or
more information,
contact Bob Faller
467-6676*



Yes!
I want to be a member.

Just copy this page, cut on dotted line above, complete the requested information below, then mail it along with your annual dues to:

Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge
13751 Upper Embankment Road
Nampa ID 83686

Name(s)

Address

City/State /Zip

Phone

Email

Annual Membership Levels
(Please mark one)

_____ Owl (senior or student)	\$ 10.00
_____ Deer (individual)	\$ 15.00
_____ Fox (family)	\$ 25.00
_____ Osprey	\$ 50.00
_____ Eagle	\$ 100.00
_____ Goldeneye	\$ 500.00

**Join
the
Friends
of
Deer
Flat
Refuge**

Yes!
I want to be involved.

Please mark all areas of interest and ways you'd like to participate.

- ☐ Habitat Enhancement
- ☐ Staffing the Bookstore
- ☐ Organizing events
- ☐ Litter lifts
- ☐ Weed eradication
- ☐ Project Management
- ☐ Photographic Documentation of Events and Activities
- ☐ Historian
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Publicity / Public Relations
- ☐ Grant Writing
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Lobbying and Advocacy
- ☐ Board of Directors
- ☐ Advisory on specific policies, protocols and processes.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Engraved Brick Fundraiser for Refuge Pollinator Garden

To provide for many refuge activities, Friends of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge sell engraved bricks that are placed in the Refuge Pollinator Garden. For \$35 each or 2 for \$60, your brick(s) will be a permanent part of the Pollinator Garden located just behind the Refuge Visitor Center.

For more information, please contact

Friends of Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge (c/o Bricks)
13751 Upper Embankment Road, Nampa, ID 83686